

Black Frog



BLACK FROG is a Diplomacy Zine that emphasizes that Postal Diplomacy is fun to play! The publisher is John H. ('Jack') Masters, 25711 North Vista Fairways Drive, Valencia, CA 91355. Telephone: (805) 259-2811.

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Effective January 1st, 1981 to new subscribers, subscriptions to BF are 50¢ per issue with a minimum sub for ten issues. (= \$5.00 minimum sub)

Diplomacy is a multi-player war game invented by Allan B. Calhamer and owned by Avalon Hill Company. At the present time, there are no game openings in BF.

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I really didn't plan on putting out an issue of BF this week. I was going to put out a heavier than usual issue next week when all of the games have deadlines coming up. Although I have plenty of material to fill this up and plenty of time on my hands (I am still out on strike, going into the tenth week now) I figured enough was enough and was going to wait a bit. But then in yesterdays mail, I received a copy of PEEK. This does require a bit of comment. But a bit of trivia first.

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MARK BERCH Dept. (Mark always likes to hear the weather reports from various parts of the country along about this time of year.)

A few days ago I was helping my 7th grade son David with his spelling.

BJ: "Spell sophisticated."

David: "S-O-P-H-I-S-T-I-C-A-T-E-D"

BJ: "Very good, David; now spell weather."

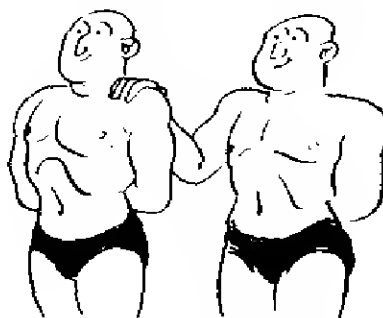
David: "W-E-O-A-T-H-E-R"

And, my friends that is the worse spell of 'weather' that we have had in Southern California all year!!

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RUSSIERS



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In spite of everything, people are still taking my off-of-the-cuff remarks in Black Frog serious. In BF #28 I commented that since Don Horton was ceasing publication of Claw and Fang with issue #124 after ten years of publication, that I thought that it was a pretty good idea and I would stop publishing Black Frog after 124 (one-hundred and twenty-four) issues as well, but I would race Horton to see who got to 124 first. Now BF comes out pretty frequently, but to publish 96 issues in four months must be a bit hard to conceive. However, I have just received issue #5 of Torpedo from Bernard Sampson who leads off with this dedication:

"This issue is dedicated to Jack Masters, who, following the lead of Don Horton, has announced that he will cease publication of BLACK FROG with issue #24. Sorry to see you go Jack, we'll all miss you."

But I'm not gone yet Bernie, this is issue #31 and I haven't even slowed down yet. I don't expect that I will beat Don Horton's ten years of publication, but I think I have a very good chance of beating his 124 issues.

By the way Bern's zine Torpedo is certainly worth a look if you haven't seen it yet. It is a well done, easy to read product and he has game openings. Write to Bernard Sampson, 123 Sixth Street, Middlesex, NJ 08846 for a sample.

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Y'ALL is a fake! I recently received a copy of Y'All which purported to be a new zine from Gary Coughlan, but is it really? I think not.

Gary is the scoundrel who has recently produced several fakes of other peoples zines and who has announced that he will soon be coming out with his own zine. But, he has maintained that his zine will be entitled Europa Express.

Somebody upstaged Gary and produced a fake zine for him before he could even get issue #1 off the press.

Y'All is entertaining and light. It generally pokes fun at Coughlan and the south. It has a couple of game starts (including a pseudonym game that includes Bernie Oaklyn and Jane Proskin among others) plus a restart of the infamous Black Hole game from Voice of Doom.

My copy was mailed from some place called Phoenicia, New York (a long ways from Memphis!). I have my ideas as to who is responsible, but will keep quiet.



Have you seen Whitestonia lately? As you may or may not know, John Caruso who publishes this rag, likes to put sketches supplied by his readers on the front page. In the latest issue, he has a real dandy. What and by who? Well, you'll have to get a copy from John to see for yourself. Write: John Caruso, 42-34 Saull St., Flushing, New York 11355. Ask for a sample of issue #28.

Congratulations to Don Del Grande! My inside information is that Don paid seven hobbiest an average of \$17.36 each, but he did fill his first game in Life of Monty. The game 1980LE has started in LoM #6. Seriously, however, Don does have a pretty nice looking zine and he does have plenty of game openings. Write to Don Del Grande, Priestley Hall #208, 2400 Durant Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94720 for a sample.

Retaliation arrives! Retaliation #18 was mailed in College Park, Maryland on October 4th, 1980. My copy has finally arrived in Valencia, CA on January 12th, 1981 after 101 days in the hands of Gary Coughlan and his pals in the U.S. Postal Service. Oh yes, it had 40¢ postage due. I had already received a replacement copy from Dick a few days earlier. Retaliation is a zine that everybody is talking about (they have to because when it doesn't come

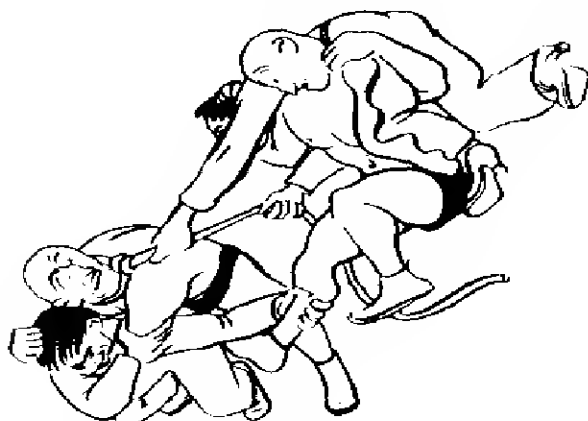
for 101 days they can't read it). It is a first class zine that always comes third class. But anyway, why not see for yourself. Write Dick Martin, 26 Orchard Way N, Rockville, MD 20854 for a sample. Don't hold your breath.

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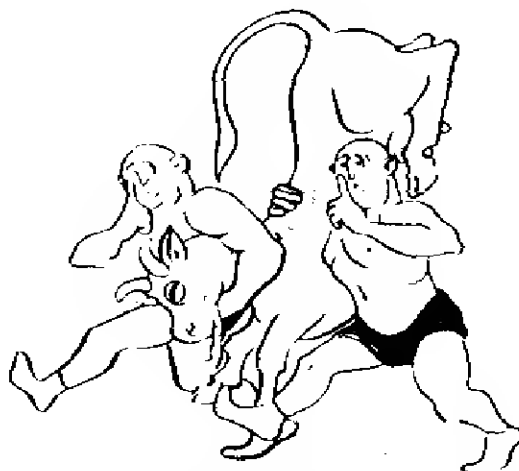
Mark Berch may have come up with the answer as to why the Iran-Iraq war is taking so long. In Diplomacy Digest Mark writes:

"...The Avalon Hill Game Company (makers and owners of Diplomacy) wanted to be the first to produce a boardgame simulating an actual war still being fought. So they whipped together a game, and asked the Iraqi and Iranian high commands to play-test it for accuracy and realism. ...AH was using the old dippy tactic of obscuring its real purpose with the cover story of 'play-testing'...thus AH has had time to prepare the marketing surveys and advertising copy, and to retool the assembly line to get the game out before the war ends..."

Why not take a look at Diplomacy Digest for yourself? Write Mark Berch, 492 Naylor Place, Alexandria, VA 22304 for a sample copy



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RASSLERS RUSSLIN

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Some of you purists out there are already asking: "Hey Black Jack, what do all of these 'rasslers and russlers' have to do with Diplomacy?"

Well that is easy enough to answer: "Nothing at all!"

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Have you seen the latest Volkerwanderung? Bob Arnett almost entirely devoted 13 pages to reprinting material from several "fake" Volkers of the past year. It makes a pretty good issue. I couldn't have done much better if I had written most of it myself.

Want to see a copy of Volker? Write to Bob Arnett, 1500 Waterway Circle, Chesapeake, VA 23320. Tell him that Jane Proskin sent you!

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Glenn Overby, pubber of Jihad is conducting a zine poll of the 'Class of '80'. A poll of the zines that began publication in 1980. Everybody in the hobby is invited to rate the new zines of 1980 on a scale of one to ten (with ten being the highest). Votes should be sent to Glenn Overby, 23096 Tawas, Hazel Park, MI 48030 before February 1st, 1981.

Zines in contention in the Overby poll include:

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|----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Torpedo | 7. Black Frog |
| 2. Mike's Mag | 8. Lone Star Diplomat |
| 3. The Power and the Glory | 9. Appalling Greed |
| 4. Jihad | 10. Plague Times |
| 5. Invasion | 11. Just Among Friends |
| 6. Life of Monty | 12. Born to Dip |

I have not yet seen Mike's Mag or The Power and the Glory, but the rest are a pretty impressive group. Jihad and Lone Star Diplomat are as good as any of the older zines right now. Appalling Greed, Torpedo and Plague Times all have sleeper qualities and could bloom into extremely fine zines in time. Black Frog certainly has a character all of its own (I am biased in its direction, however as you may suspect). Life of Monty has a lot to recommend it as do Just Among Friends and Invasion. With new zines of this caliber on the market, the Diplomacy hobby certainly does appear to be healthy as we go into the new year.

If you haven't seen all of these new zines and would like to take a look at them, some addresses are:

Invasion: Bruce Schneier, 455 East 17th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11226

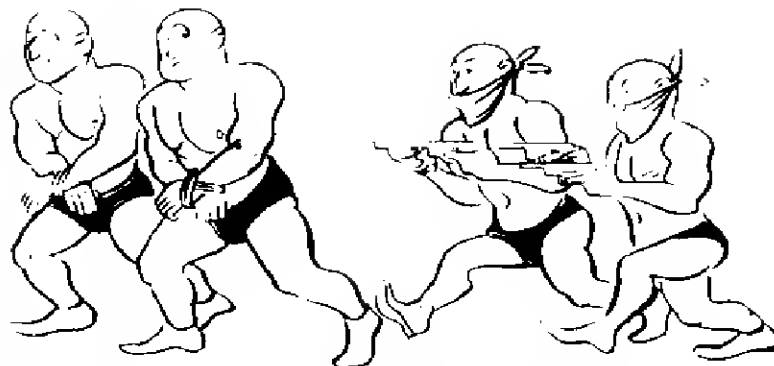
Lone Star Diplomat: Mike (hobby mascot) Conner, 3214 Beverly Road, Austin, Texas 78703

Appalling Greed: Mark Larzelere, 522 West Grand River, Howell, MI 48843

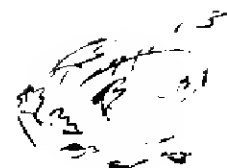
Plague Times: Marion Bates, P.O. Box 381, Kalhaska, MI 49646

Just Among Friends: Al Pearson, Route 1, Box 177 B5, Kearns-eyville, WV 25430.

Addresses for Torpedo, Life of Monty, and Black Frog are to be found elsewhere in this issue. The address for Jihad is that for Glenn Overby given above.



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IT IS BRIGHT PINK AND CALLED PEEK

A most unusual new zine found its way to my mail box yesterday; it is bright pink, has a format similar to Black Frog, is supposedly published by Jane Proskin, and has the name of Peek.

Jane Proskin is not a real person! (Or, is she?) The thing was obviously done in fun and I am one of the primary targets of the barbs.

But I must defend myself. On December 27th, the day Jane Proskin claims I was in Las Vegas with her at the Plaza Casino, I was home with my wife. I did not go to Dave Grabar's GrabarCon for a number of reasons--one of them not being to go to Las Vegas with Jane Proskin. Actually I spent the night of the 27th in Santa Monica at the home of Mike Hartman along with my wife and Mike's wife Loraine. You'll back my story won't you Mike...Mike where did you go when I need you.

Whoever wrote Peek, has some close information, however. Mike Hartman and Bill Shelton did conspire to stab me in 1979HN, I did lose a bet on Missouri in the Liberty Bowl (albeit \$10.00 and not \$500.00) and there are some other things that ring close to home.

I am not going to go into a great deal of detail in regard to Peek because I think that all or most BF subbers got a copy. Indeed genuine BF mailing labels were used to mail them out.

(This makes Gary Coughlan as very prime suspect because I recently sent him a set of BF mailing labels for him to use in mailing out copies of his upcoming zine, Europa Express.)

There were probably more than one person involved, however, the zines had a local "Van Nuys" postmark. Although a couple have said that they had "Burbank" postmarks on their copies.

Jane Proskin (or whoever is responsible for Peek) challenged me to call the first issue of Peek BF #32. She (or whoever) claims that all BF subbers received copies, and if they didn't they only had to send her a postcard at Box 6824, Burbank, CA 91510, and she would send them one.

This is a little bit irregular (but BF is highly irregular), but why not. Peek hereby becomes BF #32, but will not count against anyone's subscription. Since this (the copy in your hand) is issue #31--it will put two issues out of order, but that is no matter. And, there is some precedent for this. Remember issue #24? There are still a few subbers that have not figured out what that one was yet.

P.O. Box 6824: BURBANK

The real key to who Jane Proskin really is may well be contained in the return address she gave: Occupant, P.O. Box 6824, Burbank, CA 91510. Since she asks everybody to address her mail to Occupant it is a good indication that the box is rented under some other name and that mail addressed to Jane Proskin would not be delivered.

But what name is it rented under? Is it possible to find out? Burbank is not too far from here--about 30 miles away. When I have a chance, I will try to investigate this aspect.

WHO IS JANE PROSKIN?

When Bob Arnett published his controversial issue of Volkerwanderung (November 1980 issue #15) that he calls the "Hobby Gold" issue, I phoned him to give him my opinion of it. ("Hobby Gold" is a rather thinly disguised attack on Bruce Linsey and some of his publishing policies with which Arnett disagrees.) During this conversation with Bob, I heard the name Jane Proskin for the first time. "You know all about Jane Proskin don't you?" Bob asked, although those were not his exact words. Then when I told him I didn't and got curious, he clamed up and would say no more.

However Arnett gives some more information in a letter to the editor in Brutus Bulletin (#76, November 1980 page 10).

"...In fact, I know of an imaginary person that Linsey made up. I don't know for what purpose Bruce created this person, but she really does not exist. Have you ever seen the name of Jane Proskin in print? We were fooled at first. I put her on the Volker standby list in issue #11. But due to some information from some other people, I found out that June ((sic! Jane)) did not exist. Linsey made her up..."

What does Bruce Linsey say about all of this? Turn to Brutus Bulletin again (#77, November 1980, page 9.)

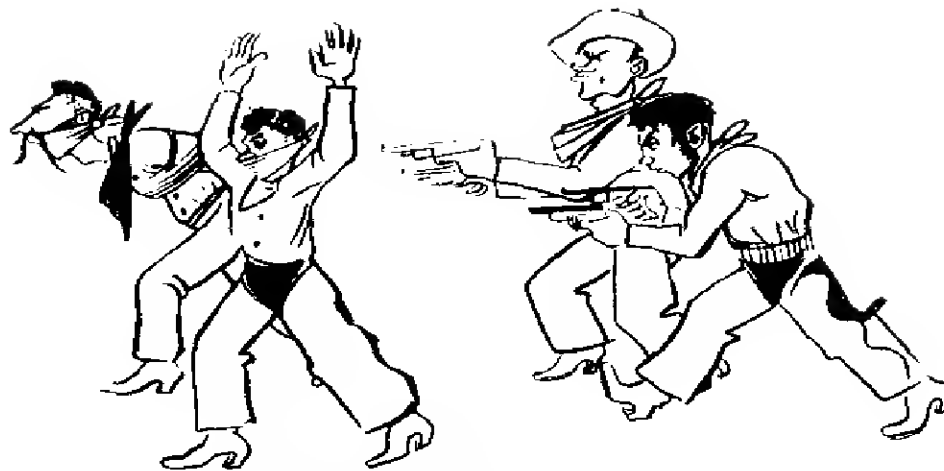
"...I thought it would be a nifty idea to invent a fake person. Don't gasp--I never intended to defraud anybody of course--but I had what I considered a neat idea for a hobby hoax. Jane Proskin would write letters to various zines, and the original plan was that she would do her darndest to annoy none other than Jack Masters! In effect we were going to make her into a hobby personality. Who is 'we'? Kathy Byrne and me.....Anyway, we also agreed to let Bob Arnett in on the secret. To add credibility to Jane, I put her on my standby list and asked Bob to do the same. Bob agreed, with the proviso that I would send him a letter from Jane asking to be a standby--so I did. It goes without saying that she would never be asked to stand by in either zine, but her name was there for the sake of appearances..... Her mailing address is actually that of my cousins, Mr. and Mrs. Rob Proskin....."

The Linsey letter goes on and on, but I have quoted the vital parts. Now enters Gary Coughlan. In his letter to the editor (Brutus Bulletin #77) he states:

"...Jane Proskin is real. Her address was printed in Voice of Doom #26. I called long distance directory assistance and got the phone number which is registered to a Proskin of that address. If Bruce has invented her, he has gone to superhuman lengths and the phone company has joined him in this conspiracy."

Well somebody is going to superhuman lengths to perpetrate the "Jane Proskin" character, because first we have the fake #27 of Murd'ring Ministers with the Joy of Jane subzine and now we have Peek. It looks like one of Linsey original objectives, "to annoy none other than Jack Masters", is being met pretty well as well.

Gary Coughlan becomes a prime suspect. He is the only one who has steadily maintained that Jane was a real person and he had access to Black Frog mailing labels.



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JOY OF JANE AND MM #27

The entire issue of Murd'ring Ministers #27, that contained the Joy of Jane subzine was obviously a fake. Ron Brown and a few others seem convinced that Al Rodriguez was responsible. Personally, I seriously doubt this. Once again I think of Gary Coughlan. Coughlan has admitted to the "Mellow Yellow Voice of Doom" and the "Bonzai for Bozo Retaliation" fakes. It appears to me that the MM job was just the latest in his series of efforts.

In any case Jane Proskin creates her own story in Joy of Jane. In this publication (December 12th, 1980) she writes:

"Yes Diplomacy player there really is a Jane Proskin. I am alive and well and right now am living with Dan Kuszynski in Bakersfield, California..... A lot of you probably want to know a little bit more about me....I won't go into great detail, but... I am 32 years old and was born in Ladysmith, Wisconsin in 1948. Until recently I lived with my late husband ... in Schenectedy, New York. My husband died ten months ago and left me no property but instead a trust fund that gives me \$4000.00 a month to live on. This is substantial enough that I don't have to work. Since I have nothing more pressing at the moment and for the next couple of years, this is what I plan on doing. I will travel about the country visiting the more prominent postal Diplomacy players; staying with those that will have me. Through my visits I will learn all about them and will report what I learn in Joy of Jane."

Well, Joy of Jane has now become Peek. Since everybody reading this has apparently also received Peek, I'll end my discussion of the "enigma of Jane Proskin."

The Deer as a Predator



THE DEER AS A PREDATOR

SHOCKING BUT TRUE!

This factual account leaves no stone unturned in bringing to light one of the greatest coverups perpetrated on the American public since Watergate.

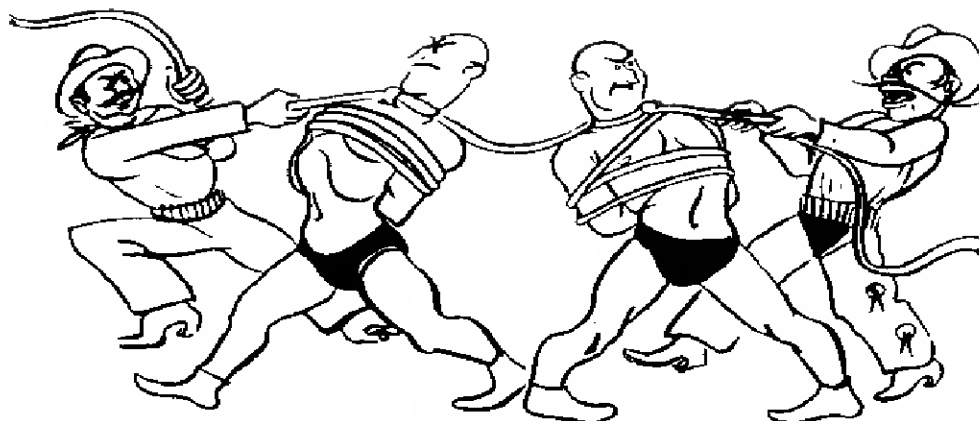
Briefly, the story is this. Dr. Wilfred Harris, noted biologist and consummate hunter, in an effort to breed a sturdy, but cunning game deer, bred Texas white-tailed bucks with Brazilian does, creating a strain of killer deer. In a fire at his Milford Oregon laboratory, 12 of the man-eating deer escaped into the wilds. From there, the story isn't a pretty one.

Now their rampaging devastation has been put down in print, thanks to naturalist Hugh Hardy and his trusted photographer, Oscar. *A story stranger than fiction, but true.* So well documented that this predator is already number 6 on the FBI most wanted list.

	Cat. #	Price	Shp. Wt.
<i>The Deer as a Predator</i> by Hugh Hardy, photographs by Oscar	(DP016)	\$7.99	4 lbs.
Deer bait (for the daring hunter)	(DP017)	25.00	150 lbs.

HOBBY MASCOT DEPARTMENT

Kathy Byrne has expressed concern that many may not be taking the nomination of her pet deer "Bloodsucker" as a serious candidate for the hobby mascot. "There are many that don't know about 'Killer Deer'", says Kathy. She would like to recommend that everybody read the above book by Dr. Wilfred Harris.



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RESULTS OF THE FIRST ANNUAL PLAYERS POLL

The first annual players poll, conducted by John Caruso (Whitestonia) has been completed. I am not going to reproduce the entire poll results, but in the tables below I am showing the winner in each category and all Black Frog subbers who received votes. For complete results, apply to John Caruso, 42-34 Saull St., Flushing, New York 11355. Send him a couple of stamps and ask for a sample of issue #28 or for the poll results.

Best Regular Diplomacy Player

1. Randolph Smyth
2. Kathy Byrne
5. (tie) Bob Arnett
Bill Hart
Dick Martin
Mark Lew
Bob Sergeant
18. (tie) Ron Brown
Arturo Guajardo
Keith Mercer
John Caruso

Best Variant Diplomacy Player

1. Fred Hyatt
2. (tie) Vern Schaller
Lee Kendter, Sr.
6. (tie) Mark Berch
John Caruso
Fred Davis
Dave Grabar
Mark Lew
Bruce Linsey
Bill Schiwantz

(First Annual Players Poll)

Best Diplomacy Article Writer

1. John Masters
2. Gary Coughlan
4. (tie) Dave Perlmutter
Kathy Byrne
6. (tie) Bob Sergeant
Bernie Oaklyn
Mark Lew
Al Pearson
15. (tie) John Caruso
Norm Schwartz

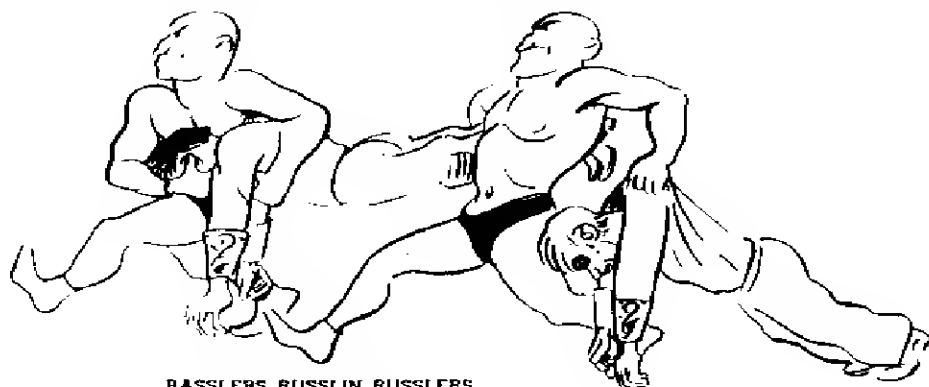
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Comments: First of all, I feel very honored to be voted the number 1 article writer in the hobby and I want to thank everyone who voted for me. John Caruso and Mark Lew should feel quite honored too--they are the only ones to receive votes in all three categories.

The turnout for the poll was a bit dissappointing as only 26 people cast votes this time. I have made a suggestion to John that he make this first poll a non-official preliminary and conduct the poll again in 1981 at the same time as the Leeder Zine Poll. In any case, I hope he does try again this year and that he will get a more hobby wide participation with quite a few more people voteing.

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Thus concludes another issue of Black Frog. Compared to the average run of Black Frogs this one has been, perhaps, a bit unusual--but which one hasn't.

Because I have gone an entire issue, up to this point, without a single mention or reference to "____" "_____"
____", I want to leave you all with this final reminder:

- Dave Perlmutter -